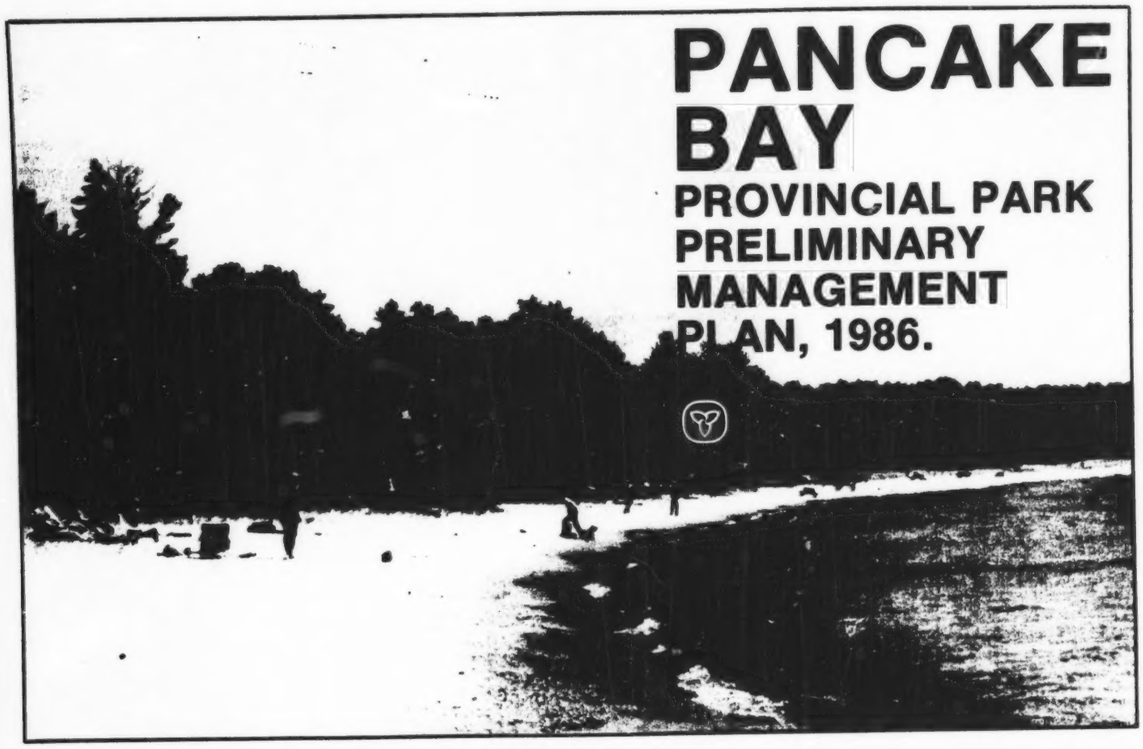


PANCAKE BAY

PROVINCIAL PARK PRELIMINARY MANAGEMENT PLAN, 1986.

INTRODUCTION

This information package is provided as your opportunity to review the Ministry of Natural Resources goal ~~and objectives for the management~~ and development of Pancake Bay Provincial Park.

A comment form is included for you to use should you wish to give us your views concerning the future management of the park.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Pancake Bay Provincial Park is located on the eastern shore of Lake Superior, 78 kilometers north of Sault Ste. Marie on Highway 17 (figure 1). The park was first operated in 1958 and officially became a provincial park by Ontario Regulation in 1968.

The 490 hectare park contains a variety of features associated with the melting of ancient glacial ice-sheets and subsequent readjustment of the Lake Superior water levels.

Classified as a recreation park, Pancake Bay caters to family oriented recreation by providing a high quality setting for camping, swimming, fishing, cycling, hiking, and children's play areas.

Pancake Bay lies within the northern part of the Great Lakes-St. Lawrence Forest Region. Within the park is found an interesting mix of vegetation with many species at their northern limits. The park forests are primarily deciduous, with sugar maple and yellow birch dominating. The beach and back-beach areas are home to rare and sensitive plant species.

The 3.5 kilometer sandy beach is one of the best on Lake Superior. The cool waters of Lake Superior (maximum water temperature of 19°C, July-August) provide a refreshing swimming experience, and the wide expanse of beach is an excellent site for other recreational pursuits.

It was this beach that attracted voyageurs to the area as they canoed across Lake Superior in the 1700's and 1800's. The name Pancake Bay is derived from folk stories that told of voyageurs preparing batches of pancakes from their remaining provisions as they travelled from this area to Sault Ste. Marie.

Pancake Bay Provincial Park contains 338 campsites; 69 have electrical hookups. Six group camping sites are capable of serving 250 campers, and a picnic area has parking for 130 vehicles.

There are 56 vault privies with hand basins and a comfort station with shower facilities, flush toilets, and hand basins.

A children's fish pond, a recreation play area, a 3.5 kilometer nature trail and an amphitheatre comprise the remaining recreational facilities.

Figure 1: Provincial Setting

PARK POLICIES

Pancake Bay Provincial Park has been classified as a recreational park within the system of provincial parks because of its natural setting and proximity to Highway 17, a major recreation and tourism travel route. The area has traditionally attracted local campers from Sault Ste. Marie, Canada and from Michigan, as well as highway travellers enroute to other destinations.

GOAL

Pancake Bay Provincial Park can support a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities for large numbers of people in attractive surroundings. All four provincial objectives as described in the Provincial Parks Policy (1978) will be achieved: recreation, heritage appreciation, tourism, and protection.

OBJECTIVES

Protection

"To protect provincially significant elements of the natural and cultural landscape of Ontario."

The park and adjacent areas contain a variety of landscape elements significant to this part of Ontario. Protection of the sensitive beach and back-beach environment is paramount, particularly in light of the intensive recreational use in this portion of the park. The ancient beach and riverine features of the area also warrant protection.

Heritage Appreciation

"To provide opportunities for exploration and appreciation of the outdoor natural and cultural heritage of Ontario."

Pancake Bay offers opportunities for visitors to learn about the area's natural and cultural heritage including eastern Lake Superior geology and ecology, Great Lakes transportation, Native occupations, the fur trade, and mining. These heritage themes will be presented through self-guided trails, displays, literature, and the park host program.

Tourism

"To provide Ontario's residents and out-of-province visitors with the opportunity to discover and experience the distinctive regions of Ontario."

Pancake Bay Provincial Park receives the majority of its use from tourists trsvelling the Highwsy 17 route along Lake Superior. This type of use is expected to continue. Promotion of the resources of the park and adjacent area attractions will enhance the tourism potential of this area.

Recreation

"To provide outdoor recreation opportunities ranging from high intensity day use to low intensity wilderness experiences."

Pancake Bay Provincial Park, with its small land base, is not capable of contributing to wilderness recreation experiences. The park will continue to provide approximately 96,300 car camping and 33,000 day use opportunities as described in the Sault Ste. Marie District Land Use Guidelines (1982).

There is a need, however, to expand some existing facilities, including day hiking and children's play areas to provide more services for park visitors.

WHAT'S INSIDE?

Background information on Pancake Bay Provincial Park (page 1).

Proposed zoning, management strategies, and preliminary development proposals for Pancake Bay Provincial Park (pages 2-3).

The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources' Park Management Planning Process (page 4).

An invitation for you to comment on the proposed management for Pancake Bay Provincial Park (page 4).

PROPOSED MANAGEMENT STRATEGY

The following proposed management strategies address how the resources of the park will be managed. Existing resources will be preserved and maintained. Visitor services will be improved.

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Resource management of Pancake Bay will be carried out in accordance with the park management plan. A park operating plan will be prepared. The operating plan will contain specific operational guidelines on how to carry out the management of the park's landforms, vegetation, fisheries, and wildlife.

Landforms

Lake Superior storm waves have resulted in natural erosion along some sections of the shoreline. Loss of park property, trees and possible threats to some facilities may result over the long-term.

The proposed strategy is:

- to evaluate the existing and potential erosion sites along Lake Superior within the park, and to establish a course of action to assess erosion. The study should assess what action, if any, is required to reduce the effects of erosion on the beach environment and facilities.

Vegetation

The variety of vegetation resources within the park range from sensitive and rare beach/dune grasses to mature conifer and deciduous forest.

The natural vegetation is an important component of the recreational setting and visitors experiences. A concerted effort is required to ensure its long-term health and maintenance.

The proposed strategy is:

- to thin and prune existing vegetation around existing facilities, roadways and campsites to increase or preserve aesthetics and to reduce hazardous situations;

- to determine and meet annual requirements for transplanting native plants within the park, where required for aesthetic, landscaping, or erosion protection purposes;

- to monitor campsites, trails and recreational areas to determine if vegetation rehabilitation efforts are required to correct compaction,erosion or overuse problems, and to implement these corrective measures;

- to undertake a detailed examination of the sensitive beach and backbeach plant community, and to develop educational and passive restraining methods whereby foot-traffic could be diverted around or away from these areas; and

- to suppress wildfires in accordance with the Ministry's fire management plans.

These strategies will guide the preparation of a vegetation management plan.

Fisheries

The children's fish pond is a popular recreational site within the park. Although fish stocks have been obtained annually for planting in the pond, there has been no long-term commitment for annual supply.

The proposed strategy is:

- to establish annual fish planting requirements (species and numbers) and to obtain an annual supply for the children's fish pond.

Fishing is not normally an important recreational use within the park. During the spring and fall, however, some anglers gain access through the park to launch boats in Lake Superior. Some fall angling occurs around the mouth of Black Creek, inside the park. Presently, commercial fishing in the Lake Superior portion of the park is not permitted from June 1 to September 9. No commercial fishing is permitted at any time within 1 kilometer of Pancake River or Black Creek.

Wildlife

Hunting is not permitted in Pancake Bay Provincial Park. Trapping is also not permitted, except under the direction of the Ministry of Natural Resources for the removal of nuisance animals.

Garbage:

Pancake Bay Provincial Park has a centralized garbage system for visitors. Some campers, however, leave their garbage on the site for pickup. This practice attracts undesirable wildlife habits (from gulls, crows, and bears), which create odour and litter problems, and increase maintenance efforts.

The proposed strategy is:

- to ensure, through information distribution and education, that all park visitors are aware of their responsibility to deliver their garbage to the central containers; and,

- to evaluate signage and ensure users are aware of central garbage container locations. Additional maintenance will supplement these efforts.

PARK BOUNDARY

Two parcels of land have been reviewed for possible acquisitions (figure 3).

A small parcel of land on the north side of Highway 17 is the site of an abandoned gravel pit owned by the Ministry of Transportation and Communications.

The proposed strategy is:

- to acquire this abandoned gravel pit to ensure that no incompatible developments occur which may affect the park.

A parcel of land situated on the east side of Pancake Point, south of the park boundary, has some potential for use. The site contains some interesting landforms not present in the park and is presently used informally by park visitors for hiking. The parcel is landlocked and if private development occurred, it might conflict with park use and management.

The proposed stategy is:

- to acquire the triangular parcel of land on the east side of Pancake Point for inclusion within the park.

VISITOR SERVICES

Visitor services will be managed in accordance with the park management plan. The park visitor services statement will be prepared in keeping with the direction provided in the management plan. The operating plan will comprise specific guidelines for visitor services.

Information and Interpretation

An improved visitor services program will inform visitors about park and area recreation resources.

The proposed strategy is:

- to develop a visitor services plan that integrates the variety of recreational opportunities available both within and outside the park. The plan should emphasize self use, and should not require significant staff time to implement. Area activities to be promoted would include hiking and viewing, angling, local crafts and tours;

- to promote additional organized activities within the park to be carried out by local non-profit organizations, such as the Batchawana Volunteer Fire Brigade; and,

- to continue the use of volunteer hosts as a means of distributing park and area information to campers. A well defined volunteer program would result in providing personal contact with park visitors.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Pancake Bay Provincial Park has been developed for a considerable time. With the exception of new comfort stations, there is little demand for major new facilities. The redevelopment and operation of the park will be improved by phasing out redundant structures and revising sanitation and safety procedures. Overall maintenance costs will be reduced by facility improvement (figure 2).

All development will be carried out according to approved site and development plans. Once in place, upgrading of new facilities will be managed through the park operating plan. Implementation will proceed according to work program planning and special funding initiatives.

Maintenance

Considerable annual expense and effort is required to preserve the quality of existing park facilities. Maintenance costs could be reduced by removing unneeded structures and facilities.

The proposed strategy is:

- to remove wooded log bumpers in parking areas where vegetation cover or rocks could be used to control traffic/parking; and,

- to remove unnecessary and unused structures, (e.g. the old gatehouse and the day use area change house).

Access

The existing entrance provides limited parking/waiting space for vehicle registration. Congestion regularly occurs during the late afternoon and early evening when the majority of travellers enter the park. Traffic waiting in the turning lanes on Highway 17 often constitutes a hazard to other highway traffic.

The proposed strategy is:

- in the short-term, to widen the park entrance road to accommodate an extra lane of traffic. During peak registration periods, additional staff will be assigned to hasten registrations; and

- over the long-term, to relocate the park entrance to allow for a longer entrance road to the gatehouse. This would enable registering vehicles to wait along the internal park road system and not cause Highway 17 backups.

Sanitation Services

Upgrading sanitation services are required for comfort stations and vault privies. Park visitor surveys regularly identify the need for additional shower facilities as washing in Lake Superior is neither desirable nor practical. The park is serviced by only one comfort station at the west end. The operation of 56 vault privies dispersed throughout the developed area periodically results in odour problems.

The proposed strategy is:

- to construct two additional comfort stations in the main camping area. These stations should contain shower and laundry facilities. One will be handicapped accessible. The vault toilets will be reduced in number once the comfort stations are in place; and,

- to continue to improve ventilation and odour control in the vault privies.

Electrical Services

Only 69 of the 338 campsites offer electrical hookups. Almost continuous use of these sites occurs throughout the summer, leading to campsite deterioration. Additional electrical sites will permit a wider distribution of campers wanting this service and may increase lengths of stay of visitors.

The proposed strategy is

- to increase the number of electrical sites to 120 within the park.

Children's Play Areas

There is presently one children's play area situated near the park entrance. Because of the linear nature of the park, many campers travel a considerable distance in the park to enjoy this facility.

The proposed strategy is:

- to create a children's play area in the hilltop campground.

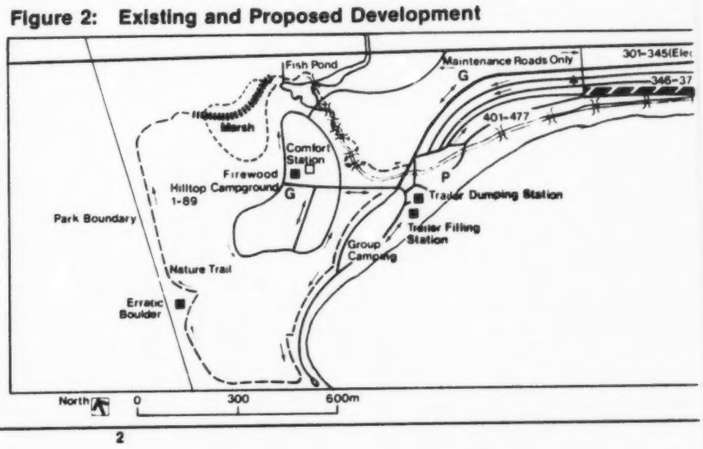
Trails

Trails could be developed and promoted as an extension of the park's recreational experience. Due to the relatively small size of Pancake Bay Provincial Park, additional trail development within the park is not feasible. There are some excellent opportunities to develop a trail system north and northwest of the park.

The proposed strategy is:

- to develop a plan for trails on Crown lands to the north and northwest of the park.

Figure 2: Existing and Proposed Development



PARK ZONING

Park zoning is undertaken to further define areas where development and management programs will be undertaken. Zoning recognizes that each park contains its own particular combination of significant resources, features and potential experiences. Zoning enables these individual areas to be allocated for specific uses or management.

Within recreation class parks, there are 5 possible land use zones: Access, Development, Natural Environment, Nature Reserve and Historical. Each zone type is managed according to both the park classification and type of resources within that zone.

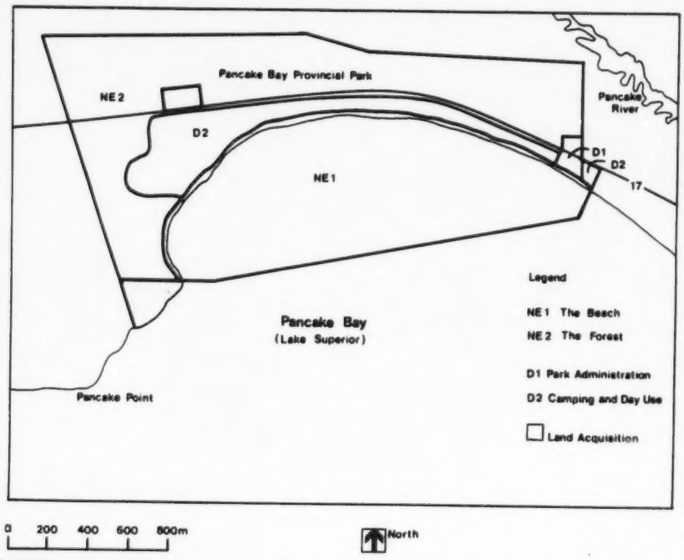
Pancake Bay Provincial Park has been divided into two development zones and two natural environment zones (figure 3). There are no historical features. Nature Reserve Zoning is not practical for the sand dune area. These features will be protected, however, through special controls in the natural environment zone.

DEVELOPMENT ZONES

D1 - Park Administration

All park support facilities such as warehousing, staff quarters, cookery, and offices will be located within this zone. Park users will not be permitted in this area.

Figure 3: Zoning and Land Acquisition



D2 - Camping and Day Use

This zone contains all camping and day use areas, the park entrance and internal road system. This portion of the park will be oriented towards intensive recreation and will also contain children's play areas, the fish pond and amphitheater. Day use recreation will be restricted to the area east of the gatehouse to minimize traffic congestion in the campsite area to the west.

NATURAL ENVIRONMENT ZONES

NE1 - The Beach

This zone includes the offshore area, beach and back beach. The boundary between this zone and the D2 zone is the line of forest vegetation surrounding the southernmost campsites, the beach road and day use area.

Recreational use in this zone will be restricted to water oriented activities such as boating, swimming and sunbathing. No additional permanent buildings will be permitted in this area. Although foot bridges and erosion control structures will be considered, access through the beach/dune grass areas will be controlled where necessary.

NE2 - The Forest

The majority of the forested portion of the park is within this zone. Recreational activites will be restricted primarily to hiking and nature appreciation. There will be no permanent structures or development other than those associated with the trails.

To the north of Highway 17, the existing park gravel pit and microwave tower access road will remain. The only long-term developed features of this area will be to provide day use walking trails and related facilities (e.g. interpretive displays, sanitary facilities, parking).

Park visitors enjoying family time on the nature trail.

Amphitheater

The amphitheater, a wood and log structure, is deteriorating. The existing seating capacity far exceeds use and maintenance efforts would be reduced by removing unneeded seating capacity.

The proposed strategy is:

- to replace the amphitheater movie screen with a metal frame structure requiring minimal maintenance; and,

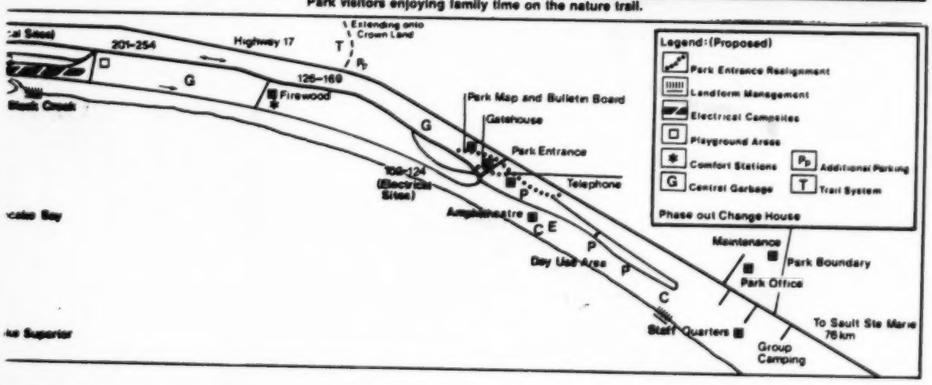
- to monitor use at the amphitheater and to reduce seating to required levels.

Concessions

Most camper supplies and services are provided by outside businesses located within a short driving distance of the park. Certain services could be made available through concessions within the park, where such services are considered appropriate and necessary, and are not readily available nearby.

The proposed strategy is:

- to continue to provide concessionnaire services for firewood and to consider other concessions as the needs arise.



YOUR PARTICIPATION

In the preceding pages we have discussed several things:

- the goal of Pancake Bay within the Ontario provincial parks system;

- the classification of the park within the Ontario provincial parks system;

- the objectives for the park;

- the market area in which the park is located, and the existing recreational opportunities;

- the present ecological, cultural, and physical characteristics of the park, their provincial significance and use limitations;

- zones appropriate to the park's classification and management policies for each zone;

- management and development strategies for resource protection; and,

- the level of visitor services programming to enable park visitors to discover and appreciate the resources.

In the preparation of these policies, we are portraying long-term development of park resources and potential management of facilities and services to meet the needs of residents and tourists. We are at the stage now where public involvement is a part of the planning process.

For Pancake Bay Provincial Park, the planning process was initiated some years ago with the collection of analysis of earth science, life science, historical and recreational data. This information, along with an evaluation of park issues and development constraints is contained in the Pancake Bay Provincial Park Background Information document, completed in 1985.

During the spring and summer of 1985, proposed management and development strategies and preliminary park zoning were prepared. These are described in the preceding sections of this report.

You can assist in the planning process by providing comments on the planning proposals contained herein. After an evaluation of all public input this fall, a final management plan will be prepared and approved.

IMPLEMENTATION AND REVIEW

Implementation of the management plan will involve the preparation of an operating plan, the development of approved services and facilities, and their long term management. Regular park programs and maintenance activities can be carried out under existing funding; however, major new facilities and physical works will only be carried out subject to the acquisition of new funds.

In order to implement the development recommendations contained in the management plan, detailed site plans will have to be developed and approved.

The approved management plan will establish priorities reflecting the needs identified in public comments. Our operational standards and funding procedures are also evaluated.

Once approved, the Pancake Bay Provincial Park Management Plan will be reviewed on an ongoing basis. After the first 10 years of the plan's 20 year life span, a detailed review will be carried out to see whether the plan is working for the park and its visitors. The following items will be reviewed and/or monitored:

- the planning process, including goals and objectives;

- background resource information and user data;

- the status of the implementation process pertaining to the park's development and management; and,

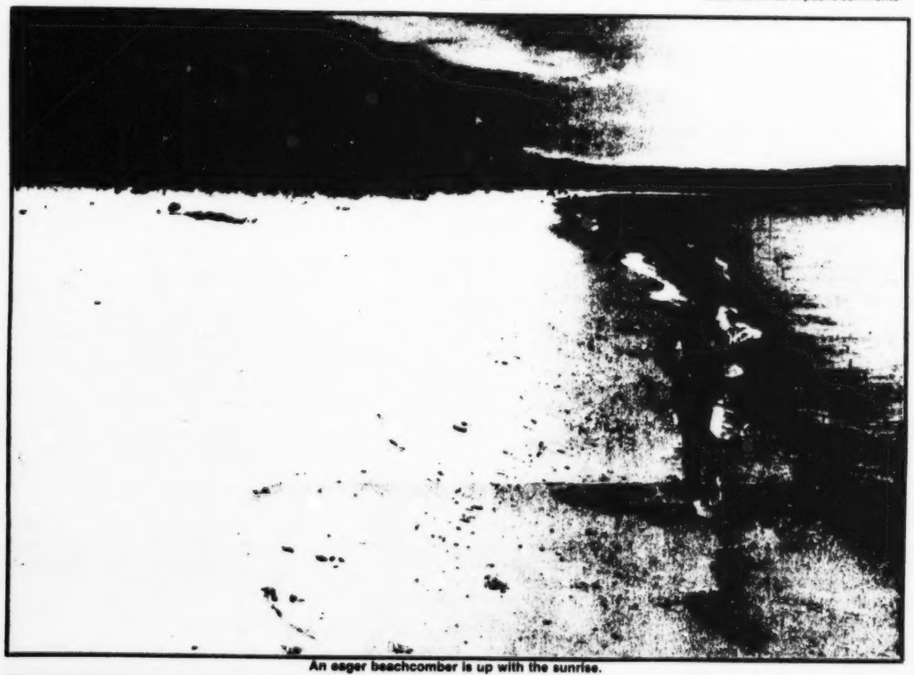
- public, Ministry of Natural Resources, and other government agencies concerns relating to the park.

Should an amendment to the management plan be required, the following process will be followed:

- documentation of the new issues/concerns and development of proposed solutions;

- public review of proposed revisions; and,

-preparation of the amendment approval and implementation of revised management plan.



An eager beachcomber is up with the sunrise.

YOUR COMMENTS PLEASE!

The following management and development strategies have been discussed in this preliminary management plan. Please indicate your preference by rating each of the items in the boxes provided. The most essential item would be rated 1; the least important, 20.

- ☐ vegetation management will occur to ensure a healthy, diversified forest, aesthetics and safety
- ☐ update the park marketing plan
- ☐ stabilize beach shoreline erosion
- ☐ fish stock will be maintained in the children's pond
- ☐ provide visitor services programming to use facilities for family activities (e.g. evening films, children's crafts)
- ☐ improve park visitors' awareness to central garbage service
- ☐ phase out change houses in day use beach area
- ☐ phase out change houses in day use beach area
- ☐ phase out roadside bumpers on campground roads
- ☐ develop children's play areas:
  - hilltop campground
  - lower campground
- ☐ increase the electrical campsites from 69 to 120
- ☐ improve facilities for disabled persons
- ☐ repair amphitheater
- ☐ redesign park entrance and gate house
- ☐ identify locations for two new comfort stations in the lower campground area
- ☐ evaluate the feasibility of expanding day use trails north of Hwy. 17

Once we have looked at some park services, approved site plans will be prepared to:

- ☐ develop new park entrance and gate house as specified
- ☐ develop new comfort stations, one in the east end of the campground first and then,
- ☐ a second one further west. Some vault toilets will be phased out at this time
- ☐ develop day use trails north of Hwy. 17

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:

Attach additional pages if necessary

Send them to ...

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